

Brief Notes of Two Addresses on Dan. 8, 9 and 11

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In the second chapter of this book the four great world-powers are described under the type of metals; in the seventh, as wild beasts. But here in chap. 8 the second and third of the four monarchies, namely, Medo-Persia and Greece, are designated, not under the symbol of "a bear" and "a leopard" respectively as in the previous chapter, but as a "ram" and a "he goat," and these two quadrupeds are distinguished from the ravening wild beasts as being "clean" animals, which the others were not. Why then, it may be asked, have we this difference of description here? It is not that there is any change in the character of these world-powers as such, but that Persia and Greece, who alone were kind to God's ancient people, are here marked off, because of their treatment to Israel, in contrast with the other powers who were cruel. If the Babylonians took Judah captive, Cyrus the Persian it was who gave commandment for the remnant to return; and so he is not only honoured by having his name recorded in the word of God, but by having it placed there some two hundred years before he himself appeared. In the vision, it is not the "saints of the high places" that are seen, but "the host of heaven" and "the stars" — the whole people are before us, not the godly ones only.

Do we wonder that God should speak in such terms of poor, sinful Israel? Let us remember how He has spoken of us. "Herein is love with us made perfect." Where do we find such language used of Israel? And the result!—"that we may have boldness in the day of judgment!" Why? "Because as he is, so are we in this world." In these chapters of Daniel we shall find that the figures become more distinct as we go on. From dead types we pass to living; from unclean to clean, till in Dan. 9 the figures are dropped, unless indeed we can call "weeks" of years figures!

Here, then, we see the ram with two horns (symbols of power), the dual kingdom of Media and Persia, the higher coming up last. Persia rose after Media, and far surpassed it in power.. The kingdom spread and became great till its adversary, Greece, arose. This had *one* horn (Alexander, which overthrew and stamped on the ram. But when "he was strong the great horn was broken." Alexander died a young man at Babylon. The horn — not the goat — was broken, and four horns came up in place of the broken horn. After Alexander's death his generals quarrelled, and at last they divided his empire among four of themselves. From one of these arose a "little horn," to be carefully distinguished from the Roman or western little horn of Dan 7. for this one comes from Greece. Antiochus Epiphanes was a typical personage, fore-shadowing the one who shall come, for we are distinctly told the judgment falls on him " at the last end of the indignation," after the tribulation and the destruction of antichrist.

In Dan. 9 we find Daniel a student of prophecy. He is studying Jeremiah. Instead of being puffed up and delighted by the near approach of the return from captivity, he (knowing the mind of God) mourns and weeps. He confesses his own sin as well as the nation's, for the nearer a man is to God the more he feels his own sin, while the proud cold heart can hardly acknowledge its fault, however great. And Gabriel is sent to tell the prophet more details. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city," etc., evidently Jerusalem, though who but God would call it "holy"! But when have all the following events been accomplished, as far as Israel is concerned? Never. The Jews still look for their fulfilment; they own that all is wrong, and they wait for it to be put right. The command to restore and to build Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes. And we have the book of Ezra to give us the command, while Nehemiah shows us how it was carried out. So we

possess both the prophecy and its fulfilment. *Seven weeks* (during which the remnant were settling in the land) are divided from the sixty-two, but together make sixty- nine, until Messiah. "After" (not *In*) "the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." Space is left here, and dates cease. A break occurs;" Messiah shall be cut off and shall have nothing" (the margin is correct). He is raised from the dead-not to the throne of David, but — to the throne of God, an entirely distinct thing.

"The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Who did destroy Jerusalem? The Romans. Thirty years ago there was no prince of Rome, but God, in His providence, has allowed that there should be one now. "And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week" — "the many" being the apostate nation. The future head of the Roman empire will make a covenant with antichrist to restore the temple service, and so help him against the king of the north. What can we say of those who suppose our Lord would make a covenant for seven Years? When He makes one, it is everlasting. But seven years is a long time for this wicked man — too long — for he breaks it in the middle of the seven years, and brings in Gentile abominations — idolatry. The Jews think they are safe from idolatry now, but none are safe but those who are on the Rock, the tried Stone, the precious Corner- Stone, the sure Foundation.

Throughout the book we have seen the visions rising from inanimate figures to living ones then to clean beasts. For the unclean "bear and "leopard" of Dan. 7 are seen in Dan. 8 as the "ram" and the "he goat." Not, as has been already pointed out, that their character was changed, but because of their kindness to Israel. Cyrus the Persian sent the captives back; Alexander, "the first king" of Greece (Dan. 8: 21), put them on a level with his Macedonian subjects, and God marks this conduct here. Then in Dan. 9 symbols are discontinued for the time, for plain language has come, the Lord Jesus being brought before us — Messiah the Prince, and He cut off.

Our chapter (Dan. 11) tonight is historical the only really and truly historical prophecy in the word of God. Though with breaks in the history, yet are the main features here given more clearly than by any human, though later, historian. " Behold there shall stand up yet three kings of Persia." We know from chap. 10 that Cvrus was reigning at the time of the vision ; he was succeeded by his son Cambyses, an unworthy son of a great father, and was followed by an usurper, Smerdis, a Mede who sought to upset Persian policy, and was the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4, who listened to the enemies of Israel. He was destroyed, and Darius the Persian (not the Mede), known in history as Darius Hystaspes, reigned. He was followed by Xerxes, "richer than they all," who led (including camp followers) 5,000,000 people across the Dardanelles into Greece, but to be defeated, and in his turn invaded by Alexander, "a mighty king." Broken at the zenith of his power, Alexander's kingdom was divided into four parts — his widow and son being murdered that his possessions might not be "to his posterity."

The terms "king of the north" and "king of the south" must be taken in relation to the land of Palestine. Egypt was to the south, and Greco-Syria (the present Turkey-in-Asia) to the north — the Ptolemies and Seleucidae being the lines of kings mentioned. During the period of the history of these kings we find the Romans coming into power; and a Roman consul was the "prince" of ver. 18 who ordered the king of the north to go home again. The Romans are also seen as the ships of Chittim in ver. 30.

"The abomination of desolation" (ver. 31) was the first placed there by Antiochus Epiphanes, but is not the one spoken of by our Lord in Matt. 24. That we find in chap. 12: 11 at the time of the

end. The Maccabees did "exploits" — they were heroes, not martyrs, and God used them as such, for they were faithful to His word. But those of "the end" will be saints, not heroes, and will perish, as we find from the Revelation. The cross comes between, and alters these things.

Ver. 35 brings us to another break, and then "the king" abruptly comes in. Who is he? Not of either north or south, for both these come against him (ver. 40). He is the king of Isa. 30: 33, and "the man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2 — the great antichrist. Daniel speaks of his political, Paul of his religious, character. He is a Jew, for "neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (Jehovah), nor the desire of women (Messiah), nor regard any god," yet he is an idolator. He invents a god. "And he shall cause them (his party) to rule over [the] many, and he shall divide the land for gain." Only one land, where the eyes of Jehovah can rest, is called "the land" — the land of Palestine.

"At the time of the end." This is his epoch. He is not spread over centuries, as a line of kings, but only appears at the end. The king of the south pushes at him, the king of the north too, and it is the latter that is the subject of the close of the chapter. We know why. The Lord Jesus, by the brightness of His coming, destroys antichrist just at the time when the king of the north goes in great annoyance to fight against meddling Egypt; for "he shall overflow and pass over." This is his first invasion of Jerusalem spoken of in Zech. 14: 2, Three countries escape him. Edom, Moab and Ammon, because they are reserved for Israel to deal with (Isa. 11: 14), and they will not escape their hand. But tidings out of the east and out of the north "trouble him," and he goes back to plant his tabernacles between the seas (the Great, or Mediterranean, and the Dead Seas), in the glorious holy mountain Jerusalem. Then comes the fulfilment of Zech. 14: 3, 1. Jehovah goes out to fight at the head of His people. He alone destroys antichrist from heaven. Here His feet stand on the earth, the mount of Olives. And Olivet owns the presence of its Creator and parts asunder. It is not riven yet — a proof that this prophecy awaits fulfilment. But the valley thus formed affords a way of escape for Israel; they flee by it, and the natural ordinances of day, and night are changed — "at evening time it shall be light," to enable them to gain the victory.

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